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ABSTRACT

This study reports results of the first year of implementation of the Success for All elementary school restructuring program in kindergarten through third grade at Philadelphia's Francis Scott Key Elementary School. Fifty-two percent of the students were from Asian backgrounds, primarily Cambodian, and spoke little or no English at home. In the evaluation of the program, all kindergarten through grade 3 students at the school and its comparison school were given several tests, including the Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery, Durrell Analysis of Reading Difficulty, the Philadelphia Public Schools' Citywide Test, and the Bilingual Syntax Measure. Although methodological limitations of the study render the conclusions tentative, results indicate a strong positive effect of the Success for All program on the reading performance of limited English proficient students. This effect was seen most dramatically in the second grade, in which substantial effects were found on all measures. It is concluded that Success for All is working at Francis Scott Key. (RH)

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THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

SUCCESS FOR ALL

Effects on the Achievement Of Limited English Proficient Children

Robert E. Slavin

Mary Leighton

Renee Yampolsky

Report No. 5

June 1990

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CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON EFFECTIVE SCHOOLING FOR DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS

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Success for All: Effects on the Achievement Of Limited English Proficient Children

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The Center

The mission of the Center for Research on Effective Schooling for Disadvantaged Students (CDS) is to significantly improve the education of disadvantaged students at each level of schooling through new knowledge and practices produced by thorough scientific study and evaluation. The Center conducts its research in four program areas: The Early and Elementary Education Program, The Middle Grades and High Schools Program, the Language Minority Program, and the School, Family, and Community Connections Program.

The Early and Elementary Education Program

This program is working to develop, evaluate, and disseminate instructional programs capable of bringing disadvantaged students to high levels of achievement, particularly in the fundamental areas of reading, writing, and mathematics. The goal is to expand the range of effective alternatives which schools may use under Chapter 1 and other compensatory education funding and to study issues of direct relevance to federal, state, and local policy on education of disadvantaged students.

The Middle Grades and High Schools Program

This program is conducting research syntheses, survey analyses, and field studies in middle and high schools. The three types of projects move from basic research to useful practice. Syntheses compile and analyze existing knowledge about effective education of disadvantaged students. Survey analyses identify and describe current programs, practices, and trends in middle and high schools, and allow studies of their effects. Field studies are conducted in collaboration with school staffs to develop and evaluate effective programs and practices.

The Language Minority Program

This program represents a collaborative effort. The University of California at Santa Barbara is focusing on the education of Mexican-American students in California and Texas; studies of dropout among children of recent immigrants are being conducted in San Diego and Miami by Johns Hopkins, and evaluations of learning strategies in schools serving Navajo, Cherokee, and Lumbee Indians are being conducted by the University of Northern Arizona. The goal of the program is to identify, develop, and evaluate effective programs for disadvantaged Hispanic, American Indian, Southeast Asian, and other language minority children.

The School, Family, and Community Connections Program

This program is focusing on the key connections between schools and families and between schools and communities to build better educational programs for disadvantaged children and youth. Initial work is seeking to provide a research base concerning the most effective ways for schools to interact with and assist parents of disadvantaged students and interact with the community to produce effective community involvement.

Abstract

This study reports the results of the first year of implementation of the Success for All elementary school restructuring program in grades K-3 of the Francis Scott Key Elementary School, in which 52% of the students are from Asian backgrounds, primarily Cambodian, and little or no English is spoken in these children's homes. Methodological limitations of this pilot study make the conclusions tentative, but the results indicate substantial effects of Success for All on the reading performance of limited English proficient students.

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Introduction

Success for All is a program designed to ensure that every child who enters school, regardless of home background, will succeed in basic skills in the early grades and then maintain that success through the elementary years. The program uses innovative kindergarten and grade 1-3 reading programs, one-to-one tutoring from certified teachers for students who are having difficulties in reading, frequent assessment, family support services, and other interventions to try to make sure that students begin with success and remain successful through the early grades.

Studies of Success for All have found substantial positive effects of the program on student reading achievement and reduced retentions and special education referrals in schools primarily serving disadvantaged African American students (Slavin, Madden, Karweit, Dolan, & Wasik, 1990; Slavin, Madden, Karweit, Livermon, & Dolan, in press).

In previous implementations of Success for All, the students involved have been from families who are usually poor, but where English is the language of the home. With such children it makes sense to make the promise that every child will read the first time they are taught, as long as effective instruction is given in the first place and is backed up by tutoring, family support services, or other resources if needed.

Yet there is one important category of students with needs that are quite different from those from disadvantaged but English speaking homes. These are students with limited English proficiency (LEP) who come from homes in which a language other than English is the principal means of communication at home. Many LEP children arrive in kindergarten with little or no English, and face the daunting task of learning English at the same time as they are learning the regular school curriculum.

In many schools serving LEP children, bilingual education programs are used, in which students receive instruction in their native language in some subjects (particularly reading) while they are learning English. Research on bilingual education tends to support this approach (e.g., Willig, 1985; Wong-Fillmore & Valadez, 1985).

However, there are many circumstances in which bilingual education is not feasible, such as when there are too few children speaking any one language in a given school or when there are no teachers available who speak the students' language. In such situations, LEP students are simply taught in English, with English as a second language (ESL) instruction given as a supplement. Such "immersion/ESL" programs put students in the difficult position of trying to learn to read a language with which they have little facility.

The fundamental assumption of Success for All is that given appropriate instruction and adequate supplementary services, every child can learn to read in the first grade or shortly thereafter. Yet this assumption may not be valid with children who arrive in kindergarten with little or no English. How can the Success for All approach be adapted to the needs of LEP children in an immersion/ESL program and what outcomes will this have on their achievement? This is the focus of the present paper.

Implementation of Success for All

Beginning in September 1988, researchers from The Johns Hopkins University began working with the staff at Philadelphia's Francis Scott Key Elementary School to implement Success for All in grades K-3. In 1988-89, Francis Scott Key served 622 students in grades K-8. Fifty-two percent of its students are from Asian backgrounds, primarily Cambodian. Nearly all of these students enter the school in kindergarten with little or no English. Some of their fathers but

very few mothers speak English. The remainder of the school is divided between African American (22%) and white students (22%), with a small number of Hispanic students (4%). The school is located in an extremely impoverished neighborhood in South Philadelphia. Ninety-six percent of the students are from low-income families and qualify for free lunch.

Because of the unavailability of Cambodian-speaking teachers, Francis Scott Key uses an immersion/ESL approach to its LEP students. In fact, during 1988-89, not a single adult in the school spoke Cambodian, including the ESL teachers.

The Success for All program was implemented in a form similar to that in which it had been used in previous studies, with some modifications to adapt to the needs of LEP students and of the school as a whole. The major program elements are described below.

Reading Tutors

One of the most important elements of the Success for All model is the use of tutors to promote students' success in reading. One-to-one tutoring is the most effective form of instruction known (see Slavin, Karweit, & Madden, 1989). The tutors are certified teachers with experience teaching Chapter 1, special education, and/or primary reading. Tutors work one-on-one with students who are having difficulties keeping up with their reading groups. The tutoring occurs in 20-minute sessions taken from an hour-long social studies period.

In general, tutors support students' success in the regular reading curriculum, rather than teaching different objectives. For example, if the regular reading teacher is working on long vowels, so does the tutor. However, tutors seek to identify learning problems and use different strategies to teach the same skills.

During daily two-hour reading/language arts periods, tutors serve as additional reading teachers to reduce class size for reading. At Francis Scott Key, there were five tutors. The four ESL teachers also taught a reading class, reducing class size from an average of about 30 during most of the day to about 15 during reading time. Reading teachers and tutors use brief forms to communicate about students' specific problems and needs and meet at regular times to coordinate their approaches with individual children.

Initial decisions about reading group placement and the need for tutoring are based on informal reading inventories that the tutors give to each child. Subsequent reading group placements and tutoring assignments are made based on eight-week assessments, which include teacher judgments as well as more formal assessments. First graders receive first priority for tutoring, on the assumption that the primary function of the tutors is to help all students be successful in reading the first time, before they become remedial readers.

Reading Program

Students in grades 1-3 are regrouped for reading. At Francis Scott Key, the students were assigned to heterogeneous, age-grouped classes with class sizes of about 30 most of the day, but during a regular two hour reading/language arts period they were regrouped according to reading performance levels into reading classes of 15 students all at the same level. For example, a 2-1 reading/language arts class might contain first, second, and third grade students all reading at the same level.

Regrouping allows teachers to teach the whole reading class without having to break the class into reading groups. This greatly reduces the time spent in seatwork and increases direct instruction time. We do not expect reduction in class size to increase reading achievement by itself (see Slavin, 1989), but it does enable every reading class to be conducted at only one reading level, and the teacher can teach to students at the same level. This eliminates workbooks, dittos, or other follow-up activities which are needed in classes that have multiple reading groups. The regrouping is a form of the Joplin Plan, which has been found to increase reading achievement in the elementary grades (Slavin, 1987a).

The reading program itself (Madden, Slavin, Livermon, Karweit, & Stevens, 1987) takes full advantage of having substantial amounts of time available for direct instruction (because there is only one reading group in each class). Reading teachers at every grade level begin the reading time by reading children's literature to students and engaging them in a discussion of the story to enhance their understanding of the story, listening and speaking vocabulary, and knowledge of story structure.

In kindergarten and first grade, the program emphasizes development of basic language skills with the use of Story Telling and Retelling (STaR) (Karweit, 1988), which involves the students in listening to, retelling, and dramatizing children's literature. Big books as well as oral and written composing activities allow students to develop concepts of print as they also develop knowledge of story structure. Peabody Language Development kits are used to further develop receptive and expressive language.

Beginning reading is introduced in the second semester of kindergarten. In this program, letters and sounds are introduced in an active, engaging series of activities that begins with oral language and moves into written symbols. Once letter sounds are taught, they are reinforced by the reading of stories which use the sounds. The K-1 reading program uses a series of phonetically regular but interesting minibooks and emphasizes repeated oral reading to partners as well as to the teacher, instruction in story structure and specific comprehension skills, and integration of reading and writing.

When students reach the primer reading level, they use a form of Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) (Stevens, Madden, Slavin, & Farnish, 1987) with the district's Macmillan basal series. CIRC uses cooperative learning activities built around story structure, prediction, summarization, vocabulary building, decoding practice, and story-related writing. Students engage in partner reading and structured discussion of the basal stories, and work toward mastery of the vocabulary and content of the story in teams. Story-related writing is also shared within teams.

In addition to these basal story-related activities, teachers provide direct instruction in reading comprehension skills, and students practice these skills in their teams. Classroom libraries of trade books at students' reading levels are provided for each teacher, and students read books of their choice for homework for 20 minutes each night. Home readings are shared via presentations, summaries, puppet shows, and other formats twice a week during "book club" sessions.

Research on CIRC has found it to significantly increase students' reading comprehension and language skills (Stevens et al., 1987).

Eight-Week Reading Assessments

At eight week intervals, reading teachers assess how students are progressing through the reading program. The results of the assessments are used to determine who is to receive tutoring, to change students' reading groups, to suggest other adaptations in students' programs, and to identify students who need other types of assistance, such as family interventions or screening for vision and hearing problems.

Kindergarten

Francis Scott Key Elementary provides a kindergarten program that focuses on providing a balanced and developmentally appropriate learning experience for young children. The curriculum emphasizes the development and use of language. It provides a balance of academic readiness and non-academic music, art, and movement activities. Readiness activities include use of the Peabody Language Development Kits and a program called Story Telling and Retelling (STaR) in which students retell stories read by the teachers (Karweit, 1988). Prereading activities begin during the second semester of kindergarten.

At Francis Scott Key, a special addition was made to the usual form of the Success for All

program. This was a tutoring program in which seventh and eighth graders worked for forty-five minutes two days per week tutoring kindergarten students. All kindergarteners received and benefitted from tutoring, but there was a particular benefit for the Cambodian students, who were assigned to Cambodian tutors. The tutors read to and with their tutees in English, translating when necessary. Over the course of the year, the discussions developed from being primarily Cambodian to primarily English.

In a school lacking Cambodian-speaking adults, the seventh and eighth graders provided the Cambodian kindergarteners with their only opportunity to use their primary language in an instructional context. This was particularly important early in the year, when the Cambodian kindergarteners arrived with little or no English.

Program Facilitator

A program facilitator works at Francis Scott Key half-time to oversee (with the principal) the operation of the Success for All model. The facilitator helps plan the Success for All program, helps the principal with scheduling, and visits classes and tutoring sessions frequently to help teachers and tutors with individual problems. She works directly with the teachers on implementation of the curriculum, classroom management, and other issues, and helps teachers and tutors deal with any behavior problems or other special problems.

Teachers and Teacher Training

The teachers and tutors are regular Philadelphia Public Schools teachers. They received detailed teacher's manuals supplemented by two days of inservice at the beginning of the school year. For teachers of grades 1-3 and for reading tutors, these training sessions focused on implementation of the reading program, and their detailed teachers' manuals covered general teaching strategies as well as specific lessons.

Kindergarten teachers and aides were trained in use of the STaR and Peabody programs, thematic units, and other aspects of the kindergarten model. Tutors later received an additional day of training on tutoring strategies and reading assessment.

Throughout the year, inservice presentations covered such topics as classroom management, instructional pace, and cooperative learning, and the facilitator and Johns Hopkins staff organized many informal sessions to allow teachers to share problems and problem solutions, suggest changes, and discuss individual children. The staff development model used in Success for All emphasizes relatively brief initial training with extensive classroom followup and coaching and group discussion.

English as a Second Language

Students identified as limited English proficient (LEP) participated in the Success for All reading and language arts program (in English) along with their English-dominant classmates during a common period in the morning. However, these students also received separate ESL instruction in the afternoon. Students identified as beginning in English received two 45-minute periods of ESL each day, while intermediate and advanced students received one period. This is less time than the usual district program which provides three, two, and one period of ESL to beginning, intermediate, and advanced students, respectively.

The instruction provided in ESL was also quite different from that given in the district as a whole. At Francis Scott Key, the focus of the ESL program was on supporting students' success in the regular reading program. The ESL teachers used the materials and techniques of the Success for All reading program to help students with specific difficulties.

With the younger children, there was an emphasis on the program elements used in Success for All to enhance the language development of all students, such as use of the Peabody Language Development Kits, Story Telling and Retelling (STaR), listening comprehension activities, and (with older students) activities involving identification of

characters, settings, problems, and problem solutions in narratives, story summaries, and reading comprehension instruction. The program philosophy emphasized the importance of providing LEP students with help on the specific activities that constitute success in the regular school program, particularly reading activities.

Methods

Matching

Limited English proficient students at Francis Scott Key were compared to similar students at a neighborhood elementary school. Table 1 summarizes information on the two schools.

Table 1 Here

As is apparent in Table 1, the comparison school was similar to Francis Scott Key on many dimensions, but differed on several important variables. First, the proportion of Asian and of limited English proficient students was much higher at Key than at its comparison school, and the comparison school had a higher proportion of African American and Hispanic students. Historic achievement levels were higher in the control school at most grade levels -- a difference that is probably understated because LEP students often do not take the district standardized tests, and Key had many more such students. Free lunch counts in both schools were high, but the number of students in poverty at Key was fifteen percentage points higher (96% vs. 81%), making it among the most disadvantaged schools in all of Philadelphia.

The original research plan was to use routinely collected standardized test scores as covariates to ensure equality of the Success for All and control samples. However, Philadelphia does not require standardized testing of LEP students, so there was not enough data to use in the analyses. The best indication of the initial equality of the two LEP samples is that they received nearly identical scores at all grade levels on the Bilingual Syntax Measure, an assessment of students' facility in English. This measure and the findings relating to it appear below. However, it is important to note that in the absence of firm evidence that the two LEP samples were *initially* equivalent, all findings must be considered tentative.

Another problem with the matching was that there were too few LEP students to allow for meaningful comparisons at the kindergarten and third grade levels. As a result, this report focuses on results in grades 1 and 2.

Measures

At Francis Scott Key and its comparison school, all students in grades K to 3 were given individually administered tests in Spring 1989. The testers were undergraduates from a local university. The measures were as follows.

1. Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery (Woodcock, 1984). Two Woodcock scales, Letter-Word Identification and Word Attack, were individually administered to students in grades K-3. The Letter-Word scale was used to assess recognition of letters and common sight words, while the Word Attack scale assessed phonetic synthesis skills.

2. Durrell Analysis of Reading Difficulty (Durrell and Catterson, 1980). Two Durrell scales, Oral and Silent Reading, were administered to students in grades 1-3. Oral Reading presents a series of graded reading passages followed by comprehension questions, which students read aloud. The Silent Reading scale also uses graded reading passages which students read silently. Students are then asked to recall the main elements of the story. Both Oral and Silent Reading contain assessments of reading comprehension, but the Oral Reading scale has more of a decoding focus while Silent Reading ha more of a comprehension focus.

3. Citywide Test. A standardized test prepared by CTB/McGraw-Hill specifically for the Philadelphia Public Schools was administered by the district as part of its routine testing program. The Total Reading scale from this test was used as one assessment of Success for All.

4. Bilingual Syntax Measure. The Bilingual Syntax Measure is a brief assessment of students' level of facility in English. The test, which is individually administered, consists of a series of pictures which students are asked to describe. Credit is given for responses in English and for grammatically complete responses. For example, in response to a picture of a girl dancing, "The girl is dancing" would receive full credit, while "girl dancing" would receive credit as an English response but not for grammatical completeness. The BSM yields five levels of facility. Levels 2-3 can be achieved by giving answers in English but 4-5 require grammatical completeness in addition to the use of English.

Analyses

Data were analyzed using simple analyses of variance. Outcomes were characterized in terms of effect sizes, which are the differences between experimental and control means divided by the control group's standard deviations.

Results

Grade 1

First grade results are summarized in Table 2. In the first grade, LEP students at Francis Scott Key scored substantially better than comparison students in Word Attack (ES=+.99), but because of the small sample in the comparison group this difference was only marginally significant ($p<.06$). Across all five measures the mean effect size for reading was +.23. However, there was a floor effect on the two Durrell measures; many students scored zero on both subscales, and the average scores represented grade equivalent scores of less than 1.3. At these levels, such precursors of reading as word attack and letter and word identification skills are more meaningful.

No differences were found on the Bilingual Syntax Measure. In both schools, most students scored at or near BSM Level 3, which means that they responded appropriately in English to all or almost all picture cards but rarely responded using standard grammatical forms.

Grade 2

Second grade results (Table 3) strongly favored Success for All. Differences averaged +.81 across the reading measures; four of the five differences were statistically significant, and the fifth (Durrell Silent Reading) was large (ES=+.54) but only marginally significant ($p<.08$).

Table 2 Here

Table 3 Here

Discussion

The methodological limitations of this pilot study of Success for All with limited English proficient students make the study's conclusions tentative. In particular, the lack of pretest measures and the small size of the LEP comparison group are problematic.

However, the results indicate the possibility of a strong positive effect of Success for All on the reading performance of limited English proficient students. This effect was seen most dramatically in the second grade,

where substantial and significant effects were found on all measures. In first grade, an apparent floor effect on the Durrell measures reduced the overall effect, but there were strong positive effects on the Woodcock scales, particularly Word Attack.

Against this positive picture must be posed the observation that in both experimental and control schools the reading performance of the LEP children was very low. However, as students gain in English proficiency, their reading skills can be expected to accelerate.

The results on the Bilingual Syntax Measure show no effect of Success for All on English proficiency. This is not necessarily a disappointing finding. The ESL teachers at Francis Scott Key focused their instruction primarily on building student success in reading, and in this they were apparently successful. The control school's ESL program focused more directly on English language facility. The fact that the LEP students at Francis Scott Key performed no worse than LEP students in a good-quality ESL program attempting to increase English capabilities is an important finding.

The real test of Success for All at Francis Scott Key will be in its second and subsequent years. In a program as complex as Success for All there are inevitable problems and delays in startup; in particular, the tutoring component was not fully implemented until December. The first grade effects were seen primarily on word attack skills, which are precursers of reading but are not reading itself.

Whatever the methodological limitations of this study, it is clear that Success for All is working at Francis Scott Key. The staff is enthusiastic about the program and is convinced of its effectiveness, and there is every indication that children are doing well, including the results summarized here. There is still a long way to go to achieve the program's goal of success for every child, but the evidence as of the end of the first year indicates that the program is headed in the right direction.

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Table 1

Characteristics of Francis Scott Key and Comparison School

Characteristics	Key	Comparison
School Enrollment, K-8	622	533
School Enrollment, K-3	365	221
Ethnic Composition, K-3		
Asian	55%	17%
White	21%	22%
African American	21%	44%
Hispanic	4%	17%
Percent ESL, 1-3	28%	18%
National Percentile-Reading, Spring 1988		
K	42	50
1	37	47
2	17	36
3	33	31
Average Daily Attendance	90%	89%
Percent Free Lunch	96%	81%

Table 2

Effects of Success for All on Limited English Proficient Students
Grade 1

Test		SFA (N=63)	Control (N=13)	F(p)	Effect Size
Woodcock Letter-Word	x (SD)	13.97 (5.69)	12.69 (5.67)	<1 (ns)	+.23
Woodcock Word Attack	x (SD)	3.44 (4.44)	1.08 (2.40)	3.47 (.06)	+.99
Durrell Oral Reading	x (SD)	2.06 (2.44)	1.77 (4.25)	<1 (ns)	+.07
Durrell Silent Reading (Comprehension)	x (SD)	1.11 (2.33)	1.38 (4.99)	<1 (ns)	-.05
Citywide Test Total Reading	x (SD)	29.87 (6.26)	30.46 (5.64)	<1 (ns)	-.10
Mean Reading Effect Size					+.23
Bilingual Syntax Measure	x (SD)	3.09 (0.76)	3.17 (0.94)	<1 (ns)	-.08

Table 3

Effects of Success for All on Limited English Proficient Students
Grade 2

Test		SFA (N=37)	Control (N=15)	F(p)	Effect Size
Woodcock Letter-Word	x (SD)	20.74 (8.64)	14.06 (6.71)	7.58 (.01)	+1.00
Woodcock Word Attack	x (SD)	7.05 (6.19)	3.00 (3.67)	5.96 (.02)	+1.10
Durrell Oral Reading	x (SD)	7.89 (4.69)	4.87 (4.97)	4.29 (.04)	+.61
Durrell Silent Reading (Comprehension)	x (SD)	6.81 (5.16)	4.06 (5.12)	3.19 (.08)	+.54
Citywide Test Total Reading	x (SD)	38.27 (9.63)	30.27 (10.24)	7.49 (.01)	+.80
Mean Reading Effect Size					+.81
Bilingual Syntax Measure	x (SD)	3.39 (0.75)	3.36 (0.63)	<1 (ns)	+.06